

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A computer-implemented method for managing access to computer-provided
2 services for a plurality of requesters, comprising:
3 defining combinations of access characteristics and associating each of the
4 combinations with a security level;
5 associating each of the services with one of the security levels;
6 processing a login request from a requester, whereby a session is initiated;
7 determining access characteristics of the session;
8 receiving a request for one of the services from the requester; and
9 granting access to the one of the services if the access characteristics of the session
10 are associated with a security level that satisfies the security level associated with the one
11 of the services.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising, if the access characteristics of the
2 session are associated with a security level that does not satisfy the security level
3 requirement associated with the one of the services, then prompting the requester for
4 authentication data.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the access characteristics include a type of device
2 with which the session is maintained.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the access characteristics include ownership rights
2 of a device with which the session is maintained.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the access characteristics include characteristics of
2 a network over which the session is maintained.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising authenticating the requester with a
2 selected authentication method, wherein the access characteristics include characteristics
3 of the authentication method.

- 1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising associating each of the services with
2 one of the security levels in response to user selections of the security levels.
- 1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 providing a plurality of user-selectable security categories, each security category
3 including a set of security levels associated with the services;
4 establishing one of the security categories as an operating security category in
5 response to user selection of the one of the security categories; and
6 granting access to the one of the services if the access characteristics of the session
7 are associated with a security level that satisfies the security level requirement associated
8 with the one of the services in the operating security category.
- 1 9. In a system including a plurality of communications devices coupled to one or
2 more computer-provided services via a gateway arrangement, a method for managing
3 access to the services for a plurality of users at the communications devices, comprising:
4 defining combinations of access characteristics and associating each of the
5 combinations with a security level at the gateway arrangement;
6 associating each of the services with one of the security levels at the gateway
7 arrangement;
8 processing a login request from a user at the gateway arrangement, whereby a
9 session is initiated between a communications device and a service;
10 determining access characteristics of the session at the gateway arrangement;
11 receiving at the gateway arrangement a request for one of the services from the
12 user of the communications device; and
13 granting access to the one of the services if the access characteristics of the session
14 are associated with a security level that satisfies the security level associated with the one
15 of the services.
- 1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising, if the access characteristics of the
2 session are associated with a security level that does not satisfy the security level

3 requirement associated with the one of the services, then prompting the user at the
4 communication device for authentication data.

1 11. The method of claim 9, wherein the access characteristics include a type of device
2 with which the session is maintained.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein the access characteristics include ownership rights
2 of a device with which the session is maintained.

1 13. The method of claim 9, wherein the communications device is coupled to the
2 gateway arrangement via a network, and the access characteristics include characteristics
3 of the network over which the session is maintained.

1 14. The method of claim 9, further comprising authenticating the user with a selected
2 authentication method, wherein the access characteristics include characteristics of the
3 authentication method.

1 15. The method of claim 9, further comprising associating each of the services with
2 one of the security levels in response to user selections of the security levels.

1 16. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 providing a plurality of administrator-selectable security categories at the gateway
3 arrangement, each security category including a set of security levels associated with the
4 services;

5 establishing one of the security categories as an operating security category at the
6 gateway arrangement in response to administrator selection of the one of the security
7 categories; and

8 granting access to the one of the services if the access characteristics of the session
9 are associated with a security level that satisfies the security level requirement associated
10 with the one of the services in the operating security category.

1 17. An apparatus for managing access to computer-provided services for a plurality of
 2 users operating respective communications devices, comprising:
 3 means for defining combinations of access characteristics and associating each of
 4 the combinations with a security level;
 5 means for associating each of the services with one of the security levels;
 6 means for processing a login request from a user, whereby a session is initiated;
 7 means for determining access characteristics of the session;
 8 means for receiving a request for one of the services from the user; and
 9 granting access to the one of the services if the access characteristics of the session
 10 are associated with a security level that satisfies the security level associated with the one
 11 of the services.

1 18. A gateway arrangement for managing access to computer-provided services for a
 2 plurality of users at respective communications devices, comprising a computing system
 3 configured with combinations of access characteristics and associated security levels and
 4 services associated with the security levels, the gateway arrangement further configured to
 5 process login requests from the users and establish sessions between the communications
 6 devices and the services, determine access characteristics of the sessions, and selectively
 7 grant access to a service requested by a user if the access characteristics of the user's
 8 session are associated with a security level that satisfies the security level associated with
 9 the service.

1 19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the access characteristics are selected from the
 2 group including a type of device with which the sessions are maintained, ownership rights
 3 of devices with which the sessions are maintained, and characteristics of a network over
 4 which the sessions are maintained.

1 20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the computing system is further configured to
 2 authenticate the users with one or more selected authentication methods, wherein the
 3 access characteristics include characteristics of the authentication methods.